REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF YEMEN SPEAKS TO U.N. SECURITY COUNCIL AGAINST IRANIAN MILITARY OPERATIONS IN DHOFAR AND OMAN: FEBRUARY 20, 1974

Mr. Ashtal, representative of the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen:

"...I have asked to be allowed to speak, on behalf of my government, not as a bystander or as a party remotely influenced by or concerned with the latest acts of aggression perpetrated by the Irani Armed Forces against a sisterly country--Iraq-- but as a party most intimately preoccupied with the self-declared Iranian political and military patronage of our area. After all, according to Iranian military strategists, the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen is within the so-called defense perimeter of Iran--an euphemism for neo-imperialist aspirations.

Indeed, sometimes only brothers can fight ferociously, and for ulterior motives designed by inimical factions and powers which labor to maintain and enhance their political and economic interests at the expense of almost anything. Throughout the ages, the Arab and Iranian peoples have been welded together by bonds of common heritage, religion, history, and neighborliness, and, whenever they fought each other, it was never in their best respective interests, but because of the imperialists' designs and the grandeur of an alienated patron or an interest group. Today, a large number of Iranians are peacefully living in the midst of their Arab hosts in Iraq, Kuwait, Manamah, Dubai, Abu-Dhabi, and the rest of the Arab Gulf area, while Arabs are coexisting with their brothers in Iran.

But the affinity of the Arab and Iranian peoples is distasteful to imperialism and its lackeys. In 1969, when Britain contemplated and then decided on withdrawal from the Arab Gulf emirates and sheikhdoms, Iran at that time declared that there would be no power vacuum in the Gulf area, that it, Iran, was destined to be the guardian of the Gulf and its littoral emirates, and that stability would prevail under its tutelage. Almost at the same time, it abrogated its border treaty with Iraq, a despicable move aimed at manifesting its military preponderance and might.

As if to mark a new era of territorial aggrandizement and political provocation, the Iranian forces have systematically intruded across Iraqi borders and entered into Iraqi territories in an undisguised mission of continue- expansionism. The Iranian army, which is now very offensively overequipped, has been, ever since, deployed and redeployed in aggressive patterns along the 500-mile Iraqi-Iranian borders.

The latest Irani aggression on Iraqi border posts and the penetration of their armed forces five kilometers into Iraqi territory could only be regarded as an escalation of tension and an invitation to large-scale hostilities. This time, the Iranian armed forces have not only been deployed within Iraqi territories on a war footing, but they have trespassed upon Iraqi sovereignty by crossing the border, while their air force violated Iraqi air space. Those acts of provocation and outright aggression are qualitatively different in magnitude and in their ominous timing. About two thirds of the Iranian armed forces, armed to the teeth, as Ambassador el-Shibib said the other day, and deployed in offensive formations along the Iraqi borders, play with fire, thanks to the American military complex which is now searching for another Vietnam in the Middle East and an outlet for its military stocks. It is a situation which portends grave risks and bitter hostilities.

As for the timing, it is no coincidence that Iraq is being subjected to Iranian military pressure at a time when it is courageously depriving the proponents and underwriters of Israel from plundering its natural resources.

Iraq, moreover, is dedicated to defending the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people---a fact which naturally worries American imperialism and its extended arms in the Middle East. In its attempt to disrupt Arab solidarity and mitigate the over-all Arab power by exerting pressure on Iraq, Iran is doing a great service to the Zionist aggressors.

Now, in the best tradition of a self-styled mini-super-power, Iran is not only engaged on one front. Its avarice for armaments of all sorts can only be paralleled by its thirst for territorial expansion and its lust for regional overlordship. The fiasco of American imperialism in Vietnam is too recent to be overlooked by Irani militarism. On February 13, 1974, John Kroley wrote in the Christian Science Monitor:

> 'In an interview with the London Daily Telegraph, the Shah of Iran disclosed that the Iranian Rangers were fighting the guerrillas in the Omani province of Dhofar. The forces are estimated at three battalions of Iranian Sea-Rangers---that is, 3000 marines---supported by helicopters, 25 helicopters.'

The paper went on to say:

> 'The Omani army, already officered by senior officers from Britain and the Commonwealth countries, apparently welcomed the Iranian assistance which was regarded by Arab radicals as 'an invasion'.'

What else can one call such a brazen and outright incursion? Is it a goodwill visit to Oman, or a picnic with bombs? Or is Iran only testing its newly acquired weapons on a people already plagued by repression and colonialism in disguise? 'Military invasion' is what it is--an invasion not, of course, of the Sultan's palace and his imported army of mercenaries, but of Oman and its valiant people.

On February 10, 1974, the Iranian paper Kayhan boasted in bravado: 'Iranian soldiers in Oman have fought valiantly--like lions--thus demonstrating their resolve and ability to help a friendly country in need of support against international conspiracies.' 'Like lions.' By indulging in arrogant self-praise, the Iranian paper is merely trying to boost the morale of an invading army, now confronted not by a few thousand freedom fighters, but by the whole Omani people, whose pride is being insulted. Colonialists of the past have tried such ventures, 'like lions,' but they were compelled to retreat in disarray.

The nine-year old Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman and the Arabian Gulf, which is the target of the Irani invasion, now controls the whole province of Dhofar save for the beleaguered capital city of Sallalah, a prototype of Pnom Penh under constant fire. As the vanguard of the Omani people, they are exercising their right for self-determination. They do not aspire to build an empire, nor do they claim to interfere in the internal affairs of Iran. They serve not the interests of 'international conspiracies' but the welfare of the impoverished Omani people. They are the real representatives of the Omani people, and, to uproot them, Iran will have to obliterate the whole Omani people.

When, on November 30, 1971, Iranian troops invaded the Arab islands of Abu Musa and the Greater and Lesser Tunbs, the delegation of Democratic Yemen addressed a pertinent question to this Council. What are the long-term goals of Iran, Ambassador Ismail asked at the time. Well, it is now established that the three captured islands, which were immediately transformed into military bases, became the launching pads for further aggression. For the invading Iranian forces in Oman took off from those very islands, whose occupation is both illegal and condemnable. Now have we not reason to anticipate that the

invasion of Oman is only a prelude to further aggression in the Arabian Peninsula?

At a time when the fashionable word 'detente' is gradually replacing 'confrontation' and the 'cold war,' Iran is apportioning a substantial part of its resources for military build-up. With the billions of dollars spent on arms procurement, it has now become a garrison state. Is it the trend that the designs of imperialism are being materialized by local foremen? And are we small states going to be deprived of the fruits of the relaxation of tension on the international arena? I am here to draw the attention of this council to the fact that the Iranian invasion of Oman endangers the security and territorial integrity of my country. The appetite of Irani expansionism will not stop along the borders of Iraq, nor at the frontiers of the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen. Its military tentacles are already feeling out way beyond its borders and well onto the high seas. In the words of Hans Morgenthau:

> 'A nation that throws into the scales of international politics the maximum of material power it is capable of mustering will find itself confronted with the maximum effort of its competitors to equal or surpass its power. It will find that it has no friends, but only vassals and enemies.'

In addressing this Council on December 9, 1971, Mr. Afshar, the representative of Iran, referred to the question of the Irani occupation of the three islands as 'minuscule to the point of embarrassment.' By what standard is the encroachment on others' territories an ad minimis? There are no exceptions to the observation of the rules of others' territories an ad

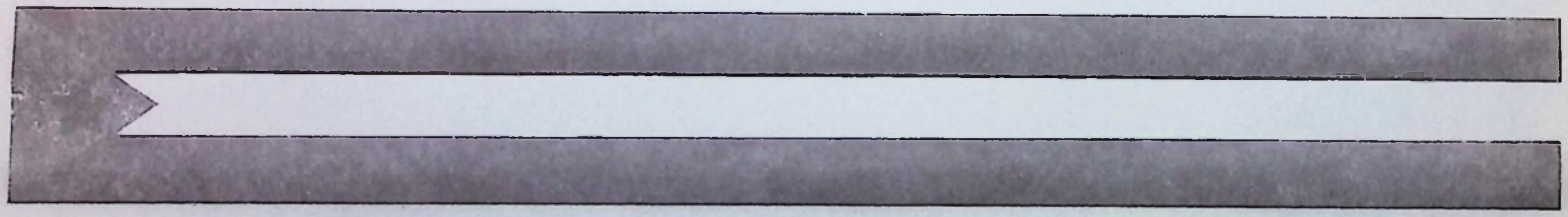
tions to the observation of the rules of law and the principles and purposes of the Charter. Seen from the perspective of the victims of aggression, those are acts of violence endangering peace and security in our area. The responsibility of this Council does not start once the flames of war have faded away and an injustice has been done. Its moral and political obligations warrant its immediate action to extinguish the first sparks of hostilities."

Mr. Ashtal's rebuttal to statements made by Abbas Hoveida, foreign minister of Iran (Hoveida accused the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen of "aggression" against Oman and Saudi Arabia and referred to the term "Persian" Gulf as "an expression historically established and universally recognized.")

"The representative of Iran made a number of allegations against my government, and I should like to take this opportunity to reply to them. He said at the beginning of his remarks that the participation of the delegation of the Democratic Republic of Yemen in this Council debate was an interference in the Council's affairs. If I remember correctly, he even said that it was a sort of encroachment. To us this is not new, because, for Iran, which has attempted to deprive us of the right to exercise our sovereignty in the area, such remarks are to be expected. Again in the best tradition of a sub-imperialist power, they would like us to sit quietly and watch them invade our area.

The representative of Iran said that the objective of the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen was to liberate the Persian Gulf. First of all, it is the Arabian Gulf, and I should like to say to him that the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen is engaged in liberating itself from the remnants of colonialism. We have no ambitions in any of our neighboring countries and, at the same time, we think it is the right of the peoples in the different countries to exercise their self-determination. We are not there to build an empire, as he said. It is very ironic that the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, a very

small country of 2 million people, should be accused of wanting to build an empire. The representative of Iran is probably speaking of the Persian Empire, and not of any other empire.

He also said that the Iranian forces went to Oman to assist Oman at the invitation of the Sultan of Oman. It would be well to recall that this kind of justification is not new to imperialist and sub-imperialist powers. We can only recall here that when the United States forces went to South Vietnam, it was at the invitation of South Vietnam, but they did plunder, and that is what the Iranians are doing in Oman.

PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF YEMEN